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*Abel  
Griscom's  
Letters.*



"The Resister"

# Rex Flintkote ROOFING



## Resists Trouble

Everything  
needed  
in the  
roll.

### You or Your Farm Hands Can Lay It Well

REX FLINTKOTE may be laid by *any man* by following the plain directions and using the outfit (complete except hammer) which comes in every roll. The labor is simple and quick—entirely different from shingles or tin.

REX FLINTKOTE Roofing is made of long fibre wool felt, saturated with an acid, alkali and water-proof material, both sides being coated with water-proof and fire-resisting compounds, protected by a covering of flint—it is, therefore, fire-resisting and water, temperature, acid, alkali, rot and wear-proof.

It may be used as a *siding* as well as a roofing, and will give absolute protection to the stock in most extreme weather.



**Write To-day for Samples** booklet and  
photos of  
REX FLINTKOTE farms. "Look for the Boy"  
on every roll. Write for book to-day.



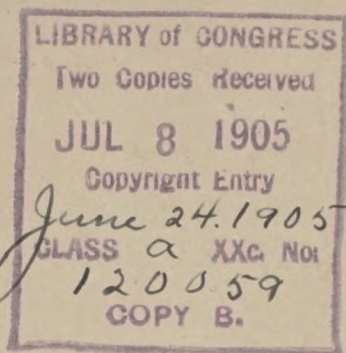
# Abel Griscom's Letters

REPRINTED FROM "THE RIDGEPOLE"



J. A. & W. BIRD & CO.  
BOSTON





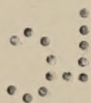
*I*N response to numerous requests from our friends, the "Letters of a Self-made Roofer to his Son" which have been appearing in *The Ridgepole*, are now published in pamphlet form under the name of

*Abel Griscom's Letters.*

They present the many good qualities of *Rex Flintkote Roofing* in an entertaining way and are commended to the reader.

J. A. & W. BIRD & CO.

34 and 35 India Street,  
Boston, Mass.



*Extra copies of this pamphlet may be had on application.*





## Letter from a Self-made Roofer to his Son

*(Mr. John Griscom has sent his father the plans for his new farm buildings, and incidentally has asked his opinion regarding roofing.)*

MY DEAR JOHN :

I'm right glad you sent me those plans. It's mighty interesting to look them over. You seem to be spending the money your mother left you about right, and she'd been proud of you. It tickled me, too, to have you ask me my opinion about roofs, for it shows that you ain't like most young fellows of your age, who think that the old man doesn't know anything, and the Lord has reserved all the wisdom of the world for the rising generation.

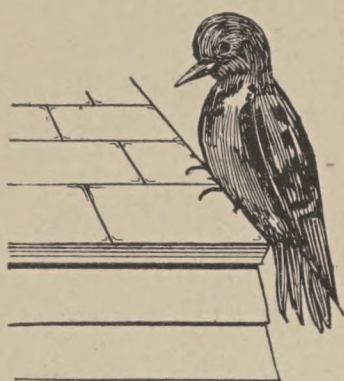
You've had a college education but there are some things you can learn inside a schoolhouse and other things outside, and while you've been absorbing knowledge in an overheated school-room, I've spent most of my time during the last twenty years straddling a ridge-pole, and I calculate that I know some things about roofs that can't be learned at a university.

Now on the subject of roofs, there is a good deal to say. There are as many kinds of roofs as there are girls at a sociable. You know the red-headed girl in lavender that will dance you off your feet without getting tired, but that all the ice cream in the supper room won't cool off when you step on her train. Then there's the light-haired girl in blue with the beau-catcher ribbons down her back, who is all right to sit out a dance with on the side porch with a glass of lemonade and two straws — but when it gets towards the end of the evening, and you pull yourself together and think what girl you will pop the question to on your way home, if you take my advice, you will pick out the little



black-haired girl in the corner, with fresh cheeks that show she has been brought up on good bread, and knows how to make it herself, and with a clear eye that tells you she won't go off into hysterics when the mouse jumps across the kitchen table.

So it is with roofs. There's some as is pretty to look at, and more as gives pretensions of being some shakes; but when it comes to the question of living under 'em and with 'em, you can't be too particular.



You ask me what I think of a tin roof—I don't think anything of it. The only person I ever saw that liked a tin roof was a woodpecker, and his only use for it was to beat a devil's tattoo on it to tell the neighborhood that there was a fool inside. In fact, a tin roof always reminds me of a tattoo, for it's crawl, crawl, crawl all the spring to find the pin holes, and paint, paint, paint all summer, and rust, rust, rust all winter. No, I haven't any use for that sort of a roof.

There was a time when I liked shingles. They cost pretty high, and it's pretty hard work to get well-seasoned ones. Besides, the labor of putting them on is considerable. In the old days, we thought a shingle roof was a pretty good one. My opinion changed, however, one night (you was a kid at the time and can't remember it) when Ephraim Hodger's barn burnt down and the wind was our way. I never shall forget how I got you out of your bed and wrapped you up in the tablecloth, and how your mother took your blankets and all the rest of them in the house and soused them in the well, and I climbed up a ladder and spread them all over the roof, and stayed there all night choking off sparks; and in spite of all had to build a new ell. Shingles are all very well in their way, as long as there's no fire 'round, but I've never slept easy under a shingle roof since. I've always said to myself there's something better'n that.

When tar roofs came along, then people thought they'd got it. Byron Wendell put a tar roof on to his farmhouse. The roof had a high pitch and overhanging eaves, and the way he used to blow about that roof made me go to the post-office in the morning for my mail instead of in the evening, I got so tired of hearing his Fourth of July oration on the subject every night down there.



He put the roof on in the spring, and I must say it looked pretty well, but one Sunday in August,—phew! wasn't it hot!—the old grey mare was sweating in her stall so badly, I took her out to give her a little fresh air, and happened to drive down the Wendell road. There was Byron and his family all out in front of the house in the shade, with palm-leaf fans in their hands trying to keep cool, and every one of them holding an umbrella in the other hand to keep off the tar that was dropping from the house. I was driving along slowly, and I smiled when I saw the scene. As I got up to the house, I sung out, "Hello, By," and you know he was just that darned mad he never answered me a word, but turned into the house and slammed the door after him. The way I laughed to myself, as I went along the road, brought the tears running down my cheeks faster than the tar was dripping off the Wendell roof.

By this time I was pretty well discouraged on the subject of roofs; but one day I happened to be looking over a magazine and my eye struck the picture of a little kid holding a roll o' roofing. The name was Rex Flintkote Roofing, and I saw it was manufactured by J. A. & W. Bird & Co., of Boston. I knew that firm, knew them years before you were born. Your grandfather used to buy goods of them, and I knew they was a reliable house. So I thought I'd write a letter to them to send me some of their Rex Flintkote for me to look at.



It so happened I had a job to cover a large barn in the neighborhood about that time and I thought perhaps this might fill the bill. When I got the samples and advertising matter I saw they stated there wasn't any tar in it, so that question was settled.

Then as to burning, I thought I would try that myself. I had a pretty good sized piece and I took a small shovelful of coals and put them on it to see what they would do. Much to my surprise the coals lay there and finally went out—didn't spread a bit, only softened up a little, and that was all.

Then I warmed it up side of the kitchen stove and found it wouldn't run. I says to myself, "Abel," says I, "I think you've got it this time."



Then I went over and showed it to Mr. Bailey, whose barn I was to cover, and I says to him, "Mr. Bailey, this is the first piece of goods I've seen that I would recommend to put on to your barn." He read over all the advertising matter and looked at the samples, and I told him about the experiments I'd tried, and he says, "Abel," says he, "that looks all right, and if your experience tells you that that is the thing I want on my barn, you just put it on," and I did.

Well, sir, that barn has brought me more business than all the roofing jobs I ever did before put together, and I've been keeping it up ever since, using nothing but Rex Flintkote Roofing. If you only had time to get over here and see some of the jobs I've been doing, it would pay you for the trip. If you take your Dad's advice, you won't think a minute of putting anything else on to your farm buildings but just Rex Flintkote Roofing, first, last, and always.

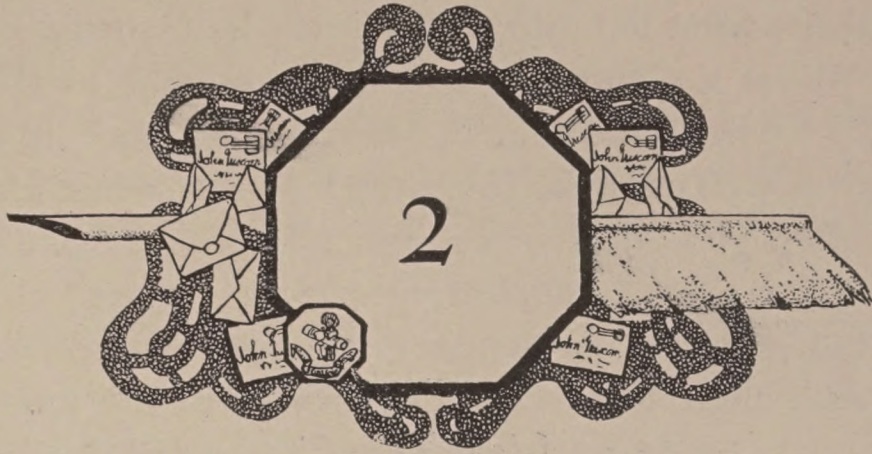
Your affectionate father,

ABEL GRISCOM.

P. S. I am thinking of going to St. Louis to see the World's Fair, and my next letter may be from there.







## Letter from a Self-made Roofer to his Son

*(In which Mr. Griscom tells of his experiences at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition.)*

MY DEAR JOHN :

Did you ever eat roast dog? No more have I, but I am paying fifty cents a day to see strange sights and this is one of them. I wandered up to the Philippine Exhibit this morning to make the acquaintance of my new brothers from the Islands, and as I strolled about I came to a group of them, with none too many clothes on, gathered about a fire. There was a yaller cur playing around and all of a sudden he was whisked up, his throat cut, and he was soon sizzling away to provide the noonday meal. The sight was enough for your respected Father and he turned away. He thought he'd had his money's worth for that day.

Well, would you believe it, I'd not gone far before who should appear but Byron Wendell, dressed in his store clothes, looking so slick you wouldn't know him. I tell you it did my eyes good to see a fellow citizen who had lived under the American flag long enough to eat beef, and the way we grasped each other's hand showed a warmth of feeling unusual to either of us.

"Well, Byron," says I, "how in the world did you get here?" "Oh, by the train," says Byron. "I got my haying done and this was a good apple year, so I thought between the two crops I would run over to St. Louis and see this show, but it's so big, I don't know where to begin."

"Byron," says I, "how would you like to look into the roofing side of this exhibition? Every man is interested in his own business, and roofing being mine, I would like to look



about and see what the different fellows have to show for themselves. What do you say to calling around to the different exhibits?" "Suits me to a T," says Byron, and off we started.

I may as well confess, John, my boy, that when I was young, I used to do a good deal of calling. There was one girl I used to drop in on; she was what they call a "gusher." There was nothing too good for me when I went there: a pillow was put into the easy chair to make me comfortable; the kerosene light



was set at the back of the room so it wouldn't try my eyes; Pa and Ma were sent to bed and a box of chocolate peppermints was at my elbow, while the dear, sweet girl sat at the cabinet organ and sang "Meet me at the Fountain," in a languishing sort of way. I couldn't get away from that house before eleven o'clock — but

somehow or other I didn't care much about going there.

Then there was another place where I called once a year and dreaded to have the months come round when I should have to call again. The old man sat on one side of the parlor and the old lady on the other, and the poor girl way across the room looking scared to death. The old lady glared at me over her spectacles and the old man invited me to sit in his pew next Sunday, while I wiggled my toes hard to keep myself from making a dead bolt for the door.

That was not the kind of place I took much pleasure in, but there was one house I used to go to considerable. There the father met me at the door with a "Hello, Abel, glad to see you! Come to see Mary? Here, Mary, here's Abel come to see you; make him as comfortable as you can," and I was made welcome, sure enough.

Mary sat on one side of the fire-place knitting a stocking and I sat on the other. We put an extra log on the fire and Mary said she didn't mind if I did light my cigar. By and by the old man came in with cider and nuts, and we talked politics and the crops, and everything was as lovely as could be. I tell you, my boarding house looked lonesome nights when I got home, and that wood fire was in my thoughts during the week so much that I went back often, and it was not many months before Mary and I were arranging to have a wood fire of our



own to sit over. And this, my boy, was the way I courted your Mother, God bless her!

Not that I set out to tell you *that*; but the three exhibits of roofing that By and I ran across took me straight back to those days. First one we came to, there was a fellow who was the biggest talker I ever saw. He had done everything — he had roofed the exhibition — he was *it*, and don't you forget it. His goods were the best and the cheapest, and a lot more besides, and he talked so fast that neither Byron nor I could get in a word edgewise. I was pulling his goods to pieces all the time he was talking, and one time when he stopped for breath, I pulled Byron's coat-tails and we slipped out. I seemed to detect a faint odor of peppermint about that booth which reminded me of old times.



Well, we walked along a spell, and there was another booth. This was quite different. There were a lot of pretty little baby-houses on the platform, covered with roofing, and we wandered around looking at them. Finally we saw a man at a desk over in the corner, who just looked up from his writing and nodded. Byron said the show reminded him of the deserted farm at the Corners — houses enough, but no people. It carried *me* back to my annual visit to the girl who was afraid of her father.

“Byron,” says I, “let's hunt up the Rex Flintkote place. I'll bet you it ain't like either of these.” So we went across to the Varied Industries Building, through the German Section and suddenly I saw what we were after. There was a beautiful booth with a big dome covered with Rex Flintkote Roofing and water pouring out from the top over the roofing, making it as pretty as a picture. There was a crowd around this booth and a very civil-spoken young man was telling about his goods — about the wool fibre from which the roofing is made and the saturation and all the other things. There was no guff about it — just good, straight, sober truth, and you could see by the people's faces that they believed it; every one of them was taking samples.

I was just going to speak up and tell them that every word he said about his roofing was true, and that I knew because I had tried it, when he looked up and says, “Hello, Mr. Griscom, glad



to see you here!" I didn't remember the young man, but it seems he had been to my place and we had had long talks together about roofing; he remembered me and I declare it did seem nice to meet another friendly face in this big exhibition. "Just go into the booth and rest yourselves a moment," he says, "I want to talk to you." So we went in and found it as pretty inside as it was out, with pictures of the buildings that had been roofed with Rex Flintkote and so on; but if you'd been walking about thirty-five miles a day for three days, you'd agree with us that the thing that looked the finest inside that booth was a nice stuffed sofa!

Pretty soon the crowd passed on and our young friend called us out and we had a pleasant chat together. He knew Rex Flintkote from A to Z, and we compared notes about it, and I was glad to see a man who was selling goods in which he believed so thoroughly. I told him all about my experience and when the crowd gathered again I just said to them, "Boys, if you know what you are doing, you'll use Rex Flintkote Roofing. It's the best thing that I ever saw and I've been in the roofing business for well nigh on to thirty years."

The Rex Flintkote man invited Byron and me out to luncheon and we had a good old-fashioned time of it in the Rice Kitchen.

Am too tired to write any more tonight. I wish you were here with me. There's a lot more I might tell you about the roofing but I haven't time—that's what we're shortest on, out here.

Your affectionate Father,

ABEL GRISCOM.

P. S. I meant to tell you that on the wall outside the Flintkote booth was a list of the Fair Buildings which had been roofed with Rex Flintkote and it figured out *eighty-two acres*. Do you realize what that means, my boy? Why, it is pretty near as big as your *whole farm*. *Just think of covering your whole farm with Rex Flintkote Roofing!*





## Letter from a Self-made Roofer to his Son

*(Mr. John Griscom has written father that work is slack on the farm and that he is thinking of selling Rex Flintkote).*

*My dear John:*

You're all right, my boy! Along in the middle of winter, when about all you have to do is to shovel out snow drifts to get to the barn door, there comes a time when you have a hankering to get out into the world, which isn't satisfied by swapping lies round the post office, and I see you've got the complaint. You can just as well leave your hired man to water the cattle and get out yourself with a sample book of Rex Flintkote Roofing and scoop a lot of spring orders, so that while you're doing your hoeing, there'll be a little pin money in the way of commissions getting ready to come your way.

I know you ain't had no experience in selling goods, but if you'll stick to the few cardinal principles that your Dad tried to instil into you with the smooth side of a shingle when you were a kid, you'll come out all right. I've always thought that selling goods was like fishing, and the same things that made a man bring home a good string of trout were pretty sure to fill up his order book also.

You've started right any way. The first thing a good fisherman does is to look to his line and his leader. It ain't much fun to play your trout till you're most ready to gaff him and to have your leader snap and see him dive into the pool with a lot of experience in his nose; it's a good deal like talking to a customer until he's just ready to give you his order for fifty squares of roofing and then to have him give



you the ha-ha ! because he's pulled the sample to pieces and found it was made of shoddy. Many a man has spoiled his chances for success as a salesman by working on poor goods and by trying to persuade the public that all-wool felt was made of burlap. You've got your Dad's head on your shoulders when you take up Rex Flintkote, for a better line and a stronger leader never made a fisherman or a salesman happy.

I remember, when I was a boy, there used to be a lot of fellows come up from the city to try their luck on our lakes for a string of trout. I used to be at work with a sapling and a box of worms at that time, but I watched their ways and how they did. There was the kind of fellow with an outfit that consisted of a new rod, a whiskey bottle and a box of cigars. He got out to the fishing about nine o'clock in the



morning and then it was time to take a drink.

Then he had to take one for luck and another because he didn't have any luck. Two hours later, you would find him fast asleep under a tree, the tip of his rod broken and his leader twisted round the tops of the alders. I didn't know it then, but it come to me pretty quick after I was a grown-up, that that was the kind of fellow who couldn't sell goods without

getting in two drinks for himself and one for his customer every time he started to trade and who usually got the grand bounce from his firm after a six months' trial.

Then you know the other chap — the one who gets his living by the sweat of his jaw. It was a terror when he come up the stream. You could hear him a mile off ! He knew all about it and would tell you just how to do it as long as you'd listen to him. Whether the trout thought there was a freshet coming or not, I don't know, but they all got down to the bottom of the pool and stayed there with their fins in their ears for the rest of the day. When a man is so busy telling you that he's IT that he doesn't know that you've slipped round the corner, you can make up your mind that his salary won't get raised at Christmas time.

But there's some fellows that it pays to watch. You have to get up at daylight to see them start out and you come



upon them unexpectedly in a quiet spot that you'd almost forgotten yourself. Their eyes are on the pool and when a big two-pounder comes up to take a squint at the sun, you find Mr. Fisherman has just the fly to tickle his nose with. He's patient, too, and gives the trout a chance to get used to him, to get acquainted like, and somehow you feel that the fish is kinder proud to be caught by such a chap, he does it all in such a pleasant way. That's the kind of salesman you want to be, my boy ! When you've struck a new man, just remember that he's sizing you up the same as you are him. The first thing he's asking himself is, " Had I better button up my pocket book ? " and when he finds he hasn't, you've secured a point. If he asks you up to the house to supper, you've landed him and as good as sold him.

There's something I like about the Rex Flintkote Folks, — they're powerful advertisers. You can't take up a magazine or an agricultural paper but what you see the Rex Flintkote Kid a-staring at you. I tell you, John, it's a mighty big help to a man to feel that the firm is working for him like that. When you go into a house and see the table covered with papers, you know that the firm has been there before you and you haven't got to begin with a song and dance to get acquainted. The mother knows all about it and the girls ask you if you're the Rex Flintkote Kid, and before you know it you're sitting up to the fire as comfortable as though you were their long-lost brother. And the best of it is, John, that that isn't the end of it. When you come round the next winter, they're just as glad to see you, for they've got the roof on by that time, and they want to tell you all about it and how glad they are you dropped in on them a year ago. Experiences like that make the cockles warm up, and you're proud as Cuffy that you've put them on to a good thing.



There's lots more for you to learn about selling goods, but you can get more in a day on the road than by a dozen letters, so get on to your job and write me about it and I will try to pump a little wisdom into you from my experiences as the days go on. Good luck to you, John !

Your affectionate Father,

ABEL GRISCOM.





## Letter from a Self-made Roofer to his Son

*(John Griscom has written to his father for some advice as to laying a roofing that he has sold.)*

*My dear John:*

You remember Lemuel Wilkins who used to give you candy when you were a kid — well, Lem had an idea that he would like to be a Justice of the Peace; so he got up his recommendations and has just been appointed.

I went to his house the other night and found him quite proud of holding an office at last but, while we were talking, he had a horrible scare, for there was a rap at the door and in walked a couple that wanted to get married. They heard that he had just been appointed a J. P., and thought they would like to christen him, as it were. Now Lemuel is a bachelor and a bashful man and not much of a church goer either, and when it come to the marriage service he did not know exactly what to do. I told him to get them to join hands and just fire away. So Lemuel made them take each other's hands and then he blushed up to the roots of his hair and coughed a little and said, "I hereby pronounce you man and woman, and may the Lord have mercy on your souls!"

"There," says Lem, much relieved that it was over, "I think that ought to make 'em stick."

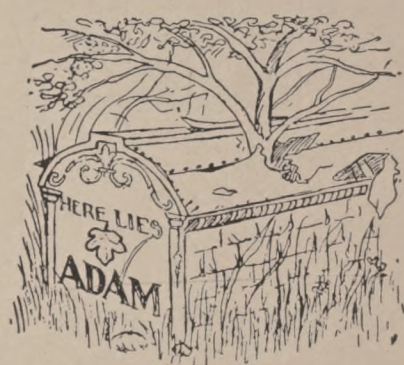
Now, when I got your letter asking me how to lay a roof, that evening at Lem Wilkins' came to my mind at once. The principal thing to do, is to make it stick, and that's where Rex Flintkote Cement comes in. It's the daisiest cement you ever saw. How those fellows ever got it up is a wonder, but there



it is, a quart can in every roll of roofing and you don't have to thin it nor thicken it nor mix it nor nothing — just put it on, winter or summer, it's all the same. It sticks those laps, so that when you try to pull them apart, the split comes in the felt but not where it was joined; the cement just holds on to both sides like death to a dead mule.

That cement is about as important as the roofing itself, for you know how it is when you are hauling a load of hay up a hill, it's the trace on the off side that has the little worn place on it, that gives way and lands your load in the ditch. So it is with roofing. You can make it as good as you please, but if the cement that comes with it ain't good for nothing, you've bought a gold brick.

And now, Johnny, a kick is as good as a wink to a blind horse, and if you're the son of your Father, you ain't going to let that little point I've just given you get stale for want of use when you're selling roofing, for it's the kind of thing you want to flash up at a man about the time he is getting ready to throw you down, because some smart Aleck has been there and told him that he could sell him a roofing for half price of the kind that was put on to Adam's Tomb, and that Adam hadn't asked for a new one yet. Then you want to tell him about Rex Flintkote Cement and explain to him that it will set right there where it is put, just like his wife's aunt when she comes on a visit — that will be a clincher, sure, especially if he's a married man.



But to come back to the subject of laying a roof. I ain't going to spend my valuable time and a two-cent stamp on giving you a lot of directions. Because why? Because the Rex Flintkote Folks have done it already. Down in the core of the roll, along with the nails and caps and cement, you will find a paper on which are the Directions for Laying, laid out as clear as the Book of Fate; illustrated with pictures, too, so that a fellow who has forgotten all he ever learned at the District School, don't have to lament the loss of education, but can make a bluff at laying a roof without it; but it cannot



be denied that reading is a powerful help to any one, even when he's up against a roofing job. There's one thing he does have to borrow, however, and that's a hammer, and if he is thrifty and has an eye for the future, he usually takes that home with him when he's finished the job.

There's one class of the community, I am sorry to say that find it difficult to lay roofing, or to do anything else for that matter; I mean the chap that needs a little common sense and a pinch of brains.

The other afternoon I hitched up the grey mare and drove over to see Eli Crawford on the Dumshire road. I was about six miles away from everything, when I saw just ahead of



me one of those automobiles that come up hereabouts nowadays, and that are more nuisance than a seven-year locust. This one was all right, though, for there it was standing stock still in the middle of the road, and it had let out the job of fussing and cussing to its owner, who was working it on a four cylinder basis. There was nothing for me to do but to haul

up the grey mare and to get into the situation. There was something in the eye of the fellow that told me it wouldn't be safe for me to offer to sell him the mare, or to indulge in any other little jokes at his expense, so I opened up the sympathetic stop, and just soothed him down a bit until he got to talking.

He told me that he had been there for two hours and had tried every blamed thing he knew and yet the machine wouldn't start. He had tested his sparking plugs, and monkeyed with his carburetter, and examined his valves, and a lot of other things that I didn't know about, and there he was just the same. He finally got to the point where he wanted to know how much I would charge him to take him to the nearest telephone, but I said to him, "Now, just hold on a minute—I don't know anything about your darned old machine and I wish they were all in Jericho, but you're a fellow mortal in trouble and if I wouldn't help you, my name



wouldn't be Abel Griscom. Just sit down here by the roadside and light your pipe and we'll talk it over.

So down we sat, and in a few minutes he was himself again. "How do you run the machine?" says I. "With gasolene, of course," says he. "How much gasolene have you got in the tank?" says I. "Plenty," says he. "Let's have a look at it!" says I, and we went over to the machine and he opened up the tank. Would you believe it, there wasn't enough gasolene in it to make a smell. Well, you never saw a fellow look so much like thirty cents in your life. He just come down from his high horse and grasped my hand humble-like, and I could have kicked him around the pasture and he wouldn't have said a word.

Now that's the kind of chap that would have trouble in laying a roof, and when it begun to leak he would write to the manufacturers that it wasn't any good. And here's where the Rex Flintkote Folks come in, for it seems as though they had thought of everything that could happen and had sized up all the darn fools in the country. On the back of the direction sheet is a page of "Don'ts" and there they tell you everything that you should not do. If any man reads that over, it's his own fault if he does not have the rightest and tightest roof in the country, when he has put on Rex Flintkote Roofing.

You may go ahead, Johnny, my boy, and take all the contracts you can get for laying Rex Flintkote Roofing, and you don't need your old Father's help as long as you read the directions and remember the "Don'ts." I'm proud to see you doing so well in the business.

Your affectionate Father,

ABEL GRISCOM.





## Letter from a Self-made Roofer to his Son

*(John Griscom has sent a letter to his Father from a man who says his new roof is leaking badly.)*

*My dear John:*

That certainly was a corking tough letter you sent me, and I don't wonder you were down in the mouth when you received it. It does make a fellow feel badly when he thinks his goods have gone wrong. Silas Warner was pretty mad when he wrote it and according to his lights he had a right to be, and no mistake. Now, I know Si! Know'd him when he was a boy! Know'd him when his father used to pull a shingle off the roof to slap him with. Perhaps that's what made him think he'd try Rex Flintkote, for Si didn't have much love for shingles after he grew up. He knew more about them than most men. Guess he thought all-wool felt was good enough for him. He had a fellow-feeling for the roof perhaps.

Now, knowing Si as I do, I wasn't so much surprised as you were, when he wrote that his roof had gone wrong. I remember the day when I was going to school and found Si on the side of the road crying to beat the band and I found that he had on his first pair of trousers and he'd put them on wrong side before. He said he couldn't tell which way to walk to get to school and he'd about given it up. Now when a boy like that gets to be a man, he's apt to have trouble and I couldn't help thinking of that little kid beside the road, while I was reading his letter to you. There's one thing, too, always comes to me when I see trouble ahead. It may





be that it's going to be the best thing a fellow ever had happen to him and be worth no end to him after it's over. That's the way I feel now as I'm writing this.

"Well," says I to myself, as I lay down your letter and his'n, "I guess this is a job for the grey mare." So the next morning I hitched up about sunrise and Belinda and I took the road. As we jogged along, I was chewing the cud and wondering what the old fool had done in laying that roof to make it leak. There were the directions as plain as the nose on your face and if he only followed them he'd be all right, but then a fellow that would put his trousers on hind side before as a boy would be sure to do some fool trick when he was a grown-up, and it was up to Abel Griscom to find out what it was.

It's a long drive over to the Warner place as you know, and the day being warm, I let Belinda take her own gait, so it was nigh on to ten o'clock when I drove up to the house. There warn't any one around at first, but in a minute a young woman came to the door and as I looked her over, I says to myself, says I, "Abel, your business is roofing and you ain't much on girls at your age, but if here ain't a mighty fine young woman, why, all your early education's been neglected." So I spruced up a bit and passed the time of day, and asked where Mr. Warner was. He was down in the field ploughing and then I says, "And who might you be, young lady? Sure, you're not Silas Warner's daughter!"

"Oh, no!" says she, "my name is Martha Stebbins. I'm just boarding here. I'm the school teacher."

"Well," says I, "I wish I was one of your scholars, Miss Stebbins!" and at that she laughed and blushed and we soon got kind of chummy like and I began to ask about the roof and what the trouble was.

"It began to leak the first rain we had," says Martha, "and it was bad for me as the water came right into my room, as it was under the roof. I wasn't much surprised that it wasn't tight, from the way it was laid, and I told Mr. Warner that I thought he'd have trouble. You see, just after the





roofing arrived, along came a man who asked for work and Mr. Warner put him on to this job and went off himself to town. After the job was done, I was in the barn and I found a lot of pieces of paper on the floor, all folded up nicely. I opened them and there were the directions for laying, which had never been opened. I asked the man about it and he said he didn't have to use them; he knew all about it already. So I wasn't much surprised when the roof leaked."

"Martha," says I, "you're a fine girl, and you've got something in your head that's better than schooling, and that is — common sense. And now, if you'll tell me where to find a ladder, I'll go up on the roof and see what an irresponsible chap can do to spoil the best roofing in the world."

So up on the roof I got and began to examine the laps,



Johnny, it is absolutely impossible for water to get through the roofing itself, and it's only by careless laying that you get a complaint. There I found just what I supposed. The fellow hadn't put on the cement properly. In some places he had spread it too thin and there was a place where he hadn't put in any at all and I run the blade of my jackknife between the laps for a foot or so. This spot was just over Martha's room and when I thought of the water running down on the dear girl's dresses, I could have punched that fellow's head. Looking a little further I found a hole where the chap had driven a nail into a crack between two boards and had pulled it out and nailed a few inches to one side and hadn't put a patch over the hole. Then he'd driven the nails too hard, so that he cupped the caps and they were full of water. He'd made an awful mess of the flashing, not putting half enough cement behind the roofing. I tell you, John, it made me sick to see the way the work had been done and to think that Rex Flintkote Roofing was supposed to be responsible for it all. I wish you'd just come over and see that roof. It would be a lesson to you. You might just take a look at Martha Stebbins, too, and see what you think of



your Father's taste. It's getting pretty lonely for me here at home all by my own self and me a widower.

Well, when I came down from the roof, there was Martha waiting for me, and when I told her all about it, she was very much pleased to think the roofing was all right, for she said she thought that Rex Flintkote looked as though it would stand any kind of weather, it was so well made. I told her she was right on that. Then we saw Si Warner coming up to dinner and when he caught sight of me, he began to tell his tale of woe, but I shut him up and says to him, "Now, Si Warner, you just hold your tongue and come up on the roof and I'll show you who's to blame for all this trouble you've been having and giving to others." So when I'd explained everything to him, he saw what a fool he'd been and he says to me, "Abel, you always was a good friend and I'm much obliged to you for coming over. Now, what shall I do about it?" So I told him that the Rex Flintkote Folks were always ready to help any one in trouble and I would get some more cement from them and would come over in a few days and make the roof tight for him.

After dinner, I had a talk with Martha and as I was leaving for home, she gave me a little bunch of arbutus she had gathered, saying she thought I ought to have something sweet to take home after all my kindness, and when Belinda and I were driving off, I don't mind telling you, Johnny, that your poor old father's heart began to pump a little in the way you youngsters know all about, but don't suppose we oldsters ever feel. What with you off by yourself and nobody nowadays to take an interest in me, I've felt pretty down in the mouth lately, but somehow, the smell of that arbutus seems to cheer me up a bit.

Your affectionate Father,

ABEL GRISCOM.





## Letter from a Self-made Roofer to his Son

*(In which Mr. Griscom discourses on things personal and otherwise.)*

*My Dear Johnny:*

You remember that I wrote you that I would like to punch the head of the man who laid Si Warner's roof. Well, if he were here tonight I'd give him the best five-cent cigar I could buy in town and he could sit with his feet on the mantel-piece and smoke it and have a bottle of tonic to go with it. That's the way I feel! I'm beginning to think that when you see trouble ahead it's just like a heavy shower in summer; it only means that there's going to be the finest sunset you ever set your eyes on. Belinda is getting to know the way to Si Warner's farm about as well as she knows the way to her pasture and I've an idea she likes the stall in his barn better than her home quarters. I'm sure I don't blame her. But I'm ahead of my story.

Well, I got some cement from the Rex Flintkote Folks to make good the work that the fellow didn't do on Silas Warner's roof and on a Saturday morning I drove Belinda over to make things right and tight. Just how I happened to pick out Saturday, I don't know, but it seemed natural to take a day when there was no school and I did not regret it.

Sure enough there was Martha Stebbins at the door-way when I drove up and I saw her blush a little when she found I had a bunch of arbutus in my button-hole, so I knew it was all right with her and that I'd done well to come Saturday when



she wasn't teaching. I put the mare in the barn and was ready for work. Martha said she was of an inquiring turn of mind and she wanted to know how roofing was laid, so she got another ladder and we were on the roof together working away, she holding the can and I putting on the cement. If a fellow could always lay roofing that way, the profession would be overcrowded.

When Silas came home to dinner he found the rightest and tightest roof in the county, for the Rex Flintkote hadn't been hurt a bit and it only needed proper cementing at the laps and flashings and an occasional patch over the nail holes to make it a job to be proud of. If you want a letter of recommendation from Silas Warner he'll give it to you with pleasure.

Well, as I was saying to you, Johnny, Belinda and I have been driving over that road a good many times since, and I may as well tell you first as last, what perhaps you haven't thought of and may surprise you a bit, that you're going to have a step-mother, my boy, and I hope you'll appreciate what your old father's doing for you, as it isn't every young man of your age as has this happiness thrust upon him. I want you to put on your store clothes and come here as soon as you can so that I can take you over and introduce you to your new mother. I've told Martha all about you and she's prepared to do the square thing by you.

There are some other things I want to talk about with you. I've been thinking over this roofing business and I believe there's a good deal more in it than you suppose. Do you realize that with shingles so high and so poor people are putting on more Rex Flintkote every year, for of course no one thinks of using tin nowadays.

There's another thing, too, I've been looking into and that is the Ibex Building and Insulating Paper that the Rex Flintkote Folks have gotten out, and I tell you it's a daisy! I believe you can sell more of that than you can of the roofing. It knocks all the other papers silly, for a man can buy the Ibex for a few dollars more and put it under his sheathing and he'll





save enough coal the first winter to make up the difference. Besides, it's damp-proof and it's vermin-proof and it never rots.

Now it's my idea, Johnny, that the quicker you and I get into this game, the sooner we'll be earning good money and as I'm going to have a family to support, I'm looking a bit that way just now. I think you'd better give up the farm and we'll hire a little store and will have a sign painted like this:

**ABEL GRISCOM & SON**

Contractors and Dealers in

REX FLINTKOTE ROOFING

IBEX INSULATING PAPERS

and if we can't do some business together, it's a pity.

I've been talking it over with Martha and she says it's all right and that confirms me in it, for a good smart woman is always a safe guide on a new undertaking, whether she knows anything about it or not. Many a man has done well, because his wife told him what to do. I don't pretend to understand it, Johnny, but it's gospel truth and you want to remember it. Martha's going to keep the books and you and I will do the rest of the work. Here's to the health of Abel Griscom & Son!

There's a little bit of business that's got to be attended to first in the way of a wedding, but an old fellow like me doesn't have much use for bridesmaids and old shoes and rice, so I guess Martha and me'll just step down to the minister's some fine day and have it done on the quiet.

Come over soon, Johnny, I want to see you.

Your affectionate father,

ABEL GRISCOM.



# Rex Flintkote Roofing

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